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10/711,165	08/29/2004	Jenny Wang	VIAP0109USA	5164
27765	7590	02/19/2009	EXAMINER	
NORTH AMERICA INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CORPORATION P.O. BOX 506 MERRIFIELD, VA 22116				JARRETT, SCOTT L
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		3624		
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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/711,165	WANG ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	SCOTT L. JARRETT	3624	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 January 2009.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-8, 10-13 and 15-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-8, 10-13 and 15-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)          | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .                                    |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .                        |

## DETAILED ACTION

1. This **Final** Office Action is in response to Applicant's amendment filed January 5, 2009. Applicant's amendment amended claims 1-8, 10-13 and 15-17 and canceled claims 9 and 14. Currently claims 1-8, 10-13 and 15-20 are pending.

### *Response to Amendment*

2. The Objection to the Title in the previous office action is withdrawn in response to Applicant's amendment to the title.

The 35 U.S.C. 101 rejection of claims 1-21 is not withdrawn.

Regarding claims 1-8, and 10-13, Applicant's addition of "showing a warning message on a monitor...." is merely a nominal recitation of structure. Nominal recitations of structure in an otherwise ineligible method fail to make the method a statutory process. See Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72. As Comiskey recognized, "the mere use of the machine to collect data necessary for application of the mental process may not make the claim patentable subject matter." Comiskey, 499 F.3d at 1380 (citing *In re Grams*, 888 F.2d 835, 839-40 (Fed. Cir. 1989)). Incidental physical limitations, such as data gathering, field of use limitations, and post-solution activity are not enough to convert an abstract idea into a statutory process. In other words, nominal or token recitations of structure in a method claim do not convert an otherwise ineligible claim into an eligible one.

Regarding Claims 15-20, claims 15-20 merely recite a system comprising a plurality of modules, i.e. software per se. However, under the current guidelines of 35

USC 101, computer software must be tangibly embodied on a computer readable medium, and, when executed by a computer processor, perform the steps of the software. In their broadest reasonable interpretation and in light of the specification, claims 15-20, as recited, can be interpreted to be embodied on abstract mediums such as carrier waves and signals, and therefore not eligible for patent protection. Accordingly, claims 15-20 are not eligible for patent protection.

***Response to Arguments***

3. Applicant's arguments filed January 5, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's argue that the prior art of record,??, fail to teach and every element of the claimed invention. Specifically Applicant argues that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest:

- determining whether a predetermined business trip period is continuous

(Remarks (Paragraph 1, Page 11);

- storing the business trip form if the predetermined business trip is continuous

(Paragraph 1, page 12);

- comparing a first business trip electronic form with a second business trip

recorded by the second business trip electronic form (Paragraph 1, Page 13)

- storing the first business trip form if the first business trip period does not

overlap with the second business trip period (Last Paragraph, Page 13).

Initially it is noted that the storing claim limitations are not required by the claimed invention as currently recited, please see the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, rejection below wherein it is noted that the claims are incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. The omitted steps are: what method steps are taken if, if any, when the predetermined business trip period is **not** continuous (Claims 1 and 15) and what happens when the first business trip period does **not** overlap the second business trip period (Claims 10 and 18).

In response to Applicant's argument that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest determining, and storing, if a business trip is continuous the examiner respectfully disagrees.

Vance et al. teach an electronic form system and method comprising: analyzing the business trip record and matching business trip request form against business rules (policies, constraints, etc.; Column 2, Lines 15-24, 49-54; Column 6, Lines 40-55; Column 7, Lines 10-47; Column 11, Lines 14-19; Figures 8, 10, 13); and storing the business trip record (Figures 2, 13, Element 128).

Head teaches a plurality of well known business policies/rules used to detect incorrect, inaccurate and/or fraudulent information in a business specifically Head teaches determining whether a predetermined business trip is continuous (Number 34) in an analogous art of business management for the purposes of catching common accounting/business errors.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the system and method for operating an electronic form system as taught by Vance et al. with its ability to check and enforce corporate policies (e.g. travel policies) would have benefited from enforcing any of a plurality of well known corporate policies including but not limited to determining if a business trip period is continuous in view of the teachings of Head; the resultant system and method enabling business to identify common business errors (i.e. potential violations of corporate policy).

Further since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it

did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Further it is noted that the recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the specific data validation policy, constraints or rules that are applied. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the specific data validation policy, constraints or rules that are applied. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP 2106.

In response to Applicant's argument that the prior art of record fails to teach of suggest comparing, and storing, a first business trip electronic form with a second business trip recorded by the second business trip electronic form if the business trip periods do not overlap the examiner respectfully disagrees.

Vance et al. teach a system and method for operating an electronic form system comprising: reading and comparing a first and second business trip electronic form previously applied by the user (Column 2, Lines 15-24, 49-54; Column 6, Lines 40-55; Column 7, Lines 10-47; Column 11, Lines 14-19; Figures 8, 10, 13); and storing the business first business trip electronic form (Figures 2, 13, Element 128).

Head teaches comparing business trip data (records) to determine if there is an overlap (duplicate, repeat; Numbers 8, 34, 24, 27) business trip in an analogous art of business management.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the system and method for operating an electronic form system as taught by Vance et al. with its ability to check and enforce corporate policies (e.g. travel policies) would have benefited from enforcing any of a plurality of well known corporate policies including but not limited to overlapping and/or duplicate business trips or expenses in view of the teachings of Head; the resultant system and method enabling business to identify common business errors (i.e. potential violations of corporate policy).

Further since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Further it is noted that the recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the specific data validation policy, constraints or rules that are applied. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the specific data validation policy, constraints or rules that are applied. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP 2106.

Additionally it is noted that form data validation and/or form error checking is old and very well known wherein a plurality of data constraints, rules, policies or other error checking procedures (e.g. date validation) are commonly performed on the form prior to storing the form data on a central computing system as evidenced by at least the following references:

- Strong, U.S. Patent No. 6,167,523, Figure 2, Element 255; Figures 4, 5, 7
- Compton et al., Intelligent Validation and Routing of Electronic Forms in a

Distributed Workflow Environment (1994) – Abstract; Section 8, Page 129; Figure 1

- Goodman, JavaScript Bible – 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (2001), Pages 37, 127-128, 646
- SmartWebby.com, JavaScript Date Validation (2002)

It is noted that the applicant did not challenge the officially cited facts in the previous office action (s) therefore those statements as presented are herein after prior art. Specifically it has been established that it was old and well known in the art at the time of the invention to subtract the overlapping leave amount from the business trip period in order to determine the actual duration of the business trip.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 1-8, 10-13 and 15-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding independent Claim 1, Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: what method steps are taken if, if any, when the predetermined business trip period is **not** continuous.

For the purposes of examination the examiner interpreted independent claim 1 to read, when a predetermined business trip period is not continuous:

A method of operating an electronic form system comprising:

- receiving a business trip electronic form inputted from a user; and
- determining whether a predetermined business trip period recorded by the business is continuous

<business trip period is not continuous, method steps end>

Regarding independent Claim 10, Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: what happens when the first business trip period does **not** overlap the second business trip period.

For the purposes of examination the examiner interpreted independent claim 10 to read, when a predetermined a first business trip period does **not** overlap the second business trip period:

A method of operation an electronic form system comprising:

- receiving a first business trip electronic form inputted from a user;
- reading a second business trip form previously applied by the user;
- comparing a first business trip period recorded by the first business trip electronic form with a second business trip period recorded by a second business trip form

*< business trip periods do not overlap, method steps end >*

Regarding independent Claim 15, Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: what method steps are taken if, if any, when the predetermined business trip period is **not** continuous.

For the purposes of examination the examiner interpreted independent claim 1 to read, when a predetermined business trip period is not continuous:

An electronic form operation system comprising:

- a receiver module for receiving a business trip electronic form inputted from a user; and
  - a first storage module for storing business trip data;
  - a computing module electrically connected to the receiving module and the first storage module for determining whether a predetermined business trip period recorded by the business is continuous

*< business trip period is not continuous, claim ends >*

Regarding independent Claim 18, Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: what happens when the first business trip period does **not** overlap the second business trip period.

For the purposes of examination the examiner interpreted independent claim 10 to read, when a predetermined a first business trip period does **not** overlap the second business trip period:

An electronic form operating system comprising:

- a receiving module for receiving a first business trip electronic form inputted from a user;
- a first storage module for storing business trip data; and
- a computing module electrically connected to the receiving module and the first storage module for reading a second business trip form previously applied by the user;
- comparing a first business trip period recorded by the first business trip electronic form with a second business trip period recorded by a second business trip form

*< business trip periods do not overlap, claim ends >*

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

6. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

7. Claims 1-8, 10-13 and 15-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claims 1-8 and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Based on Supreme Court precedent, a method/process claim must (1) be tied to another statutory class of invention (such as a particular apparatus) (see at least Diamond v. Diehr, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); Parker v. Flook, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); Gottschalk v. Benson, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972); Cochrane v. Deener, 94 U.S. 780, 787-88 (1876)) or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing (see at least Gottschalk v. Benson, 409 U.S. 63, 71 (1972)).

A method/process claim that fails to meet one of the above requirements is not in compliance with the statutory requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101 for patent eligible subject matter. Here claims 1-8 and 10-13 fail to meet the above requirements because they are not tied to another statutory class of invention.

Nominal recitations of structure in an otherwise ineligible method fail to make the method a statutory process. See Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72. As Comiskey recognized, "the mere use of the machine to collect data necessary for application of the mental process may not make the claim patentable subject matter." Comiskey, 499 F.3d at

1380 (citing *In re Grams*, 888 F.2d 835, 839-40 (Fed. Cir. 1989)). Incidental physical limitations, such as data gathering, field of use limitations, and post-solution activity are not enough to convert an abstract idea into a statutory process. In other words, nominal or token recitations of structure in a method claim do not convert an otherwise ineligible claim into an eligible one.

Claims 15-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. As recited, claims 15-20 are directed toward a computer program (system comprising of software modules), software per se. However, under the current guidelines of 35 USC 101, computer software must be tangibly embodied on a computer readable medium, and, when executed by a computer processor, perform the steps of the software. In their broadest reasonable interpretation and in light of the specification, claims 15-20, as recited, can be interpreted to be embodied on abstract mediums such as carrier waves and signals, and therefore not eligible for patent protection. Accordingly, claims 15-20 are not eligible for patent protection.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

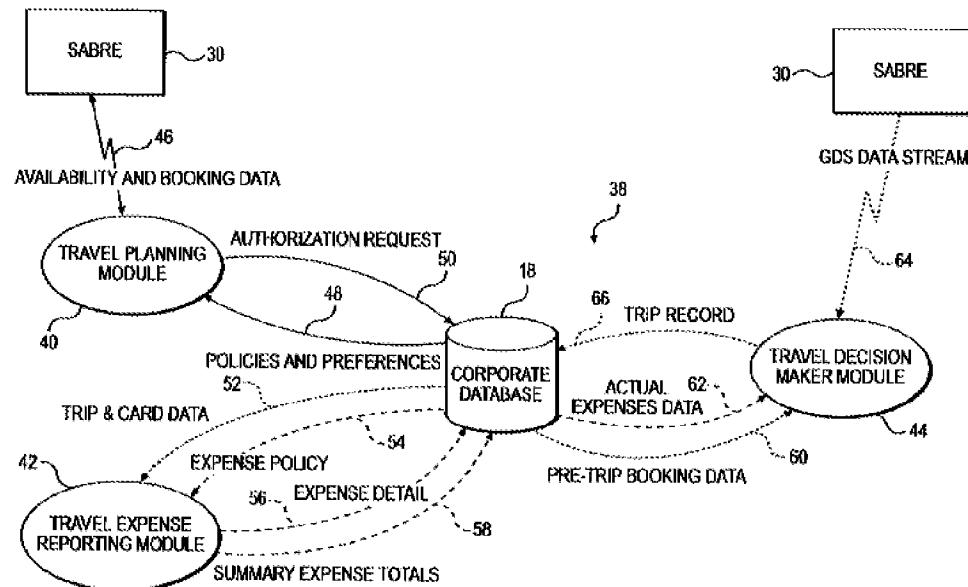
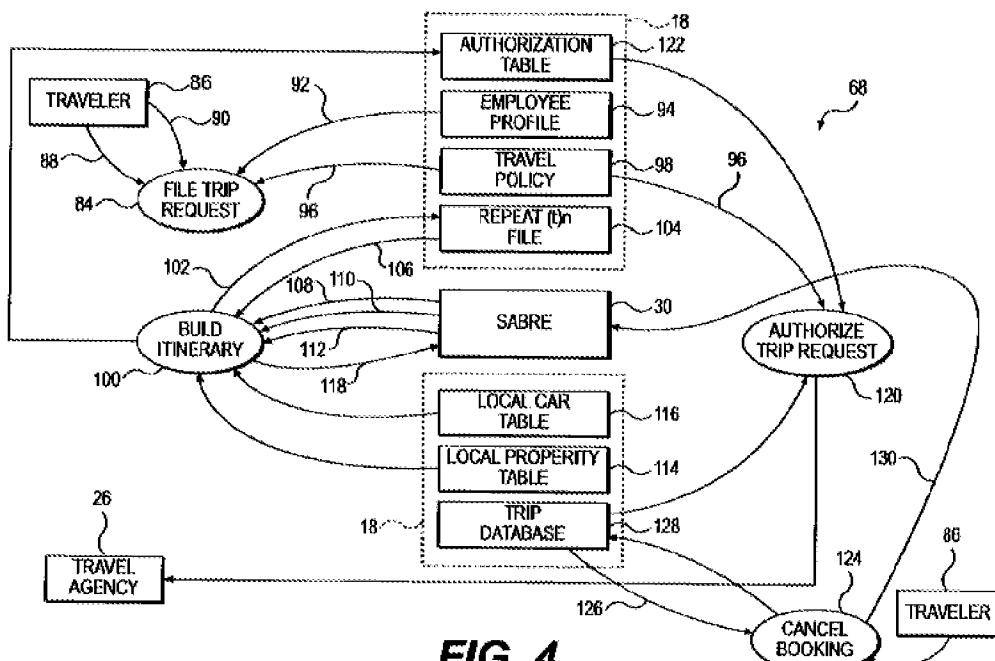
(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

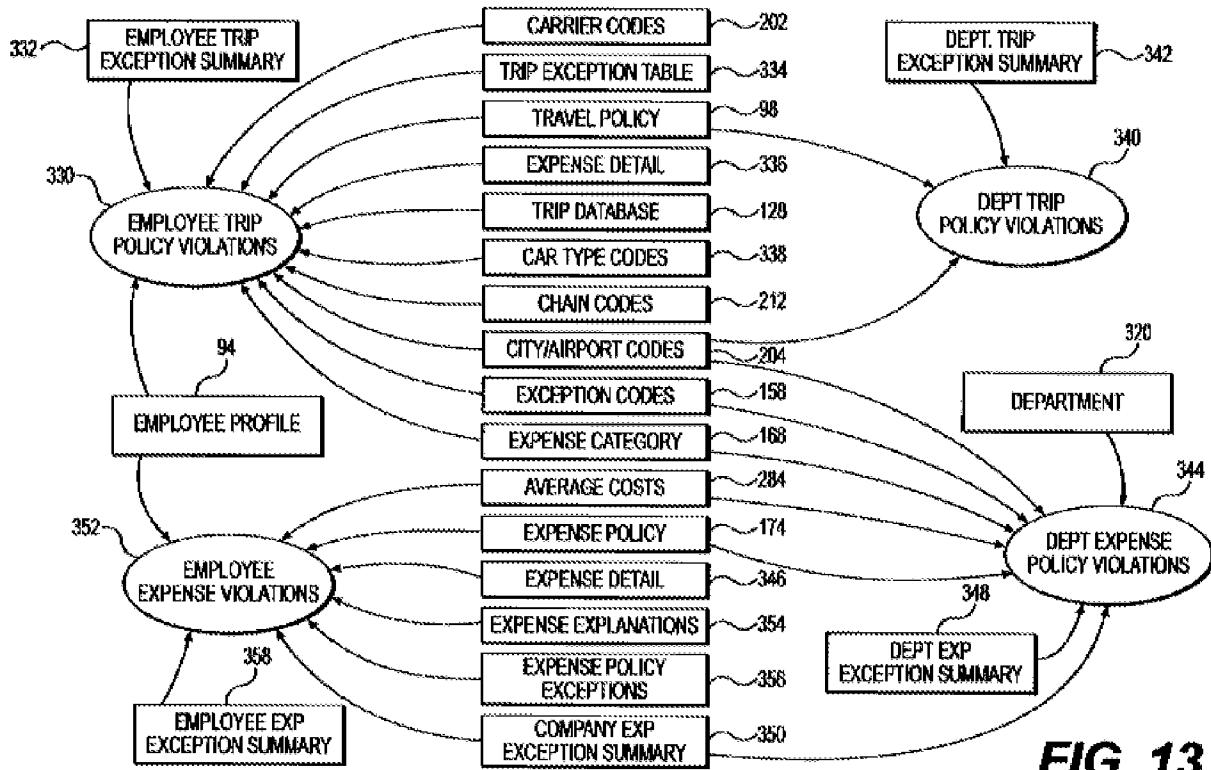
9. Claims 1-8, 10-13 and 15-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vance et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,442,526 in view of Head 101 Common Indicators of Errors (2001).

Regarding Claims 1 and 15, Vance et al. teach a system and method of operating an electronic form system comprising (Figures 2, 4, 8, 10, 13):

- receiving a business trip electronic form inputted from a user (Column 5, Lines 1-16; Figure 3, Element 68; Figure 4, Element 84, 120; Figure 2, Element 40, 50);
- analyzing the business trip record and matching business trip request form against business rules (policies, constraints, etc.; Column 2, Lines 15-24, 49-54; Column 6, Lines 40-55; Column 7, Lines 10-47; Column 11, Lines 14-19; Figures 8, 10, 13);

- storing the business trip record (Figures 2, 13, Element 128);
- showing a warning message (notification, alert) to the user if the business trip period violates a business policy (policy violation, exceptions, unauthorized trips, etc.; Column 2, Lines 14-23; Column 7, Lines 30-47; Column 8, Lines 26-33).

**FIG. 2****FIG. 4**



**FIG. 13**

While checking travel dates for continuity (e.g. start date less than end date, duplicate dates, etc.) is old and well known Vance et al. does not expressly teach - determining whether a predetermined business trip period recorded by the business trip electronic form is continuous as claimed.

Head teaches a plurality of well known business policies/rules used to detect incorrect, inaccurate and/or fraudulent information in a business specifically Head teaches determining whether a predetermined business trip is continuous (Numbers 8,

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13, 16, 34, 37) in an analogous art of business management for the purposes of catching common accounting/business errors.



#### ~~Common Accounting/Business Errors~~

##### **Duplicate Claims**

- 32) Claims for personal mileage and rental car
- 33) Claims for meals, hotel, airfare charged to corporate credit card
- 34) Overlapping travel dates

##### **Fraudulent Claims**

- 35) Gasoline charges for personal use (more than one vehicle in same day)
- 36) Consecutively numbered meal or hotel receipts
- 37) Same receipts (airline, hotel, meal, etc.) submitted a few months apart
- 38) Frequent travel to same location, not a branch location
- 39) Travel at Holiday times
- 40) Travels dated were leave was incurred.



#### ~~Common Accounting/Business Errors~~

##### **Conflict of Interest**

- 1) Vendor address same as employee address
- 2) Vendor phone same as employee phone

##### **Fraudulent vendor**

- 3) More than one vendor with the same address
- 4) Vendors with P.O. Boxes, Drop Boxes or no address
- 5) Vendors with no phone numbers
- 6) Sequentially numbered invoice
- 7) Numerous invoices just below approval thresholds
- 8) Invoices with same dates and amounts
- 9) Invoices significantly greater than purchase order
- 10) Vendor names that SOUND LIKE well known vendors
- 11) Invalid FEID numbers
- 12) Deliver to address not entity address

##### **Vendor Kickbacks/Bid Rigging**

- 13) Contract award date precedes proposal due date (bid rigging)
- 14) Bid received date of awarded contract is always latest bid (bid rigging)
- 15) Bid Limits are exceeded (Total purchase greater than bid amount)
- 16) Purchase order date prior to bid date (bid rigging)
- 17) Unit price per part number is excessive for one vendor (Price Gouging)
- 18) Contracts just below bid limits (preferential buys)
- 19) Splitting contracts to avoid bid limits (preferential buys)
- 20) Purchase quantities exceed contract quantities (excess purchases)
- 21) Purchases do not result in a related increase in inventory levels  
(merchandise never shipped or under shipped)
- 22) Inventory levels continue to rise (excess purchases)
- 23) Duplicate invoice numbers (duplicate pays)
- 24) Duplicate date and invoice amounts (duplicate billings)
- 25) Increase in production costs due to increase in supply costs (inflated prices)

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the system and method for operating an electronic form system as taught by Vance et al. with its ability to check and enforce corporate policies (e.g. travel policies) would have benefited from enforcing any of a plurality of well known corporate policies including but not limited to determining if a business trip period is continuous in view of the teachings of Head; the resultant system and method enabling business to identify common business errors (i.e. potential violations of corporate policy).

Further since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Regarding Claims 2, 16, and 19 Vance et al. does not expressly teach comparing a business trip period to a leave period as claimed.

Head teaches determining an actual business trip period according to a leave record and the predetermined business trip period (e.g. to determine if the business trip and the leave information overlap, Number 40) in an analogous art of business management for the purposes of catching common accounting/business errors.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the system and method for operating an electronic form system as taught by Vance

et al. with its ability to check and enforce corporate policies (e.g. travel policies) would have benefited from enforcing any of a plurality of well known corporate policies including but not limited to determining if a business trip and leave overlapped in view of the teachings of Head; the resultant system and method enabling business to identify common business errors (i.e. potential violations of corporate policy).

Further since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Regarding Claims 3-4 and 16 Vance et al. does not expressly teach leave request as claimed.

Head teaches determining the overlap between a business trip and leave, as discussed above (i.e. if the leave record corresponds to a leave period and the leave period is included in the predetermined business trip period).

Neither Vance et al. nor Head expressly teach subtracting the leave period from the predetermined business trip period to determine an actual business trip period or subsequently utilizing the predetermined business trip period to be the actual business trip period as claimed.

Official notice is taken that one skilled in the art at the time of the invention would have known to subtract the overlapping leave amount from the business trip period in order to determine the actual duration of the business trip.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the invention that the system and method for operating an electronic form system as taught by the combination of Vance et al. and Head with its ability to enforce corporate policies – such as identifying overlapping business and leave trips/travel would have benefited from further determining how much (duration) the leave and business trip and leave overlapped (e.g. by subtracting the leave length from the business trip length) in view of the teachings of official notice, since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Regarding Claim 5 Vance et al. teach a system and method further comprising receiving a command inputted from the user, before the predetermined business trip period, for modifying the business trip electronic form (Column 6, Lines 23-35; Figure 3, Element 68; Column 7, Lines 5-17, 48-53).

Regarding Claims 6 and 11 Vance et al. teach a system and method further comprising: determining whether the business trip electronic form is allowed (approved, accepted, etc.; Column 5, Lines 64-68; Column 6, Lines 1-35; Figure 3; Column 7, Lines 65-68), revising the business trip form if the business electronic form is allowed and blocking the business trip electronic form from being revised if the business trip electronic form is not allowed yet (Column 6, Lines 23-35; Figure 3, Element 68; Column 7, Lines 5-17, 48-53; Column 8, Lines 17-25).

Regarding Claims 7 and 12 Vance et al. teach a system and method further comprising receiving a command inputted from the user, before the predetermined business trip period, for cancelling the business trip electronic form (Column 6, Lines 23-35; Figure 3, Element 68).

Regarding Claims 8 and 13 Vance et al. teach a system and method further comprising determining if the business trip electronic form is allowed (Column 5, Lines 64-68; Column 6, Lines 1-35; Figure 3; Column 7, Lines 65-68), canceling the business trip electronic form if the business trip electronic form is allowed and blocking the business trip electronic form from being canceled in the business trip electronic form is not allowed yet (Column 6, Lines 13-35; Figure 3, Element 68).

Regarding Claims 17 and 20 Vance et al. teach a system and method further comprising showing a warning message (notification, alert) to the user if the business

trip period violates a business policy (policy violation, exceptions, unauthorized trips, etc.; Column 2, Lines 14-23; Column 7, Lines 30-47; Column 8, Lines 26-33).

Vance et al. does not expressly teach that the violated policy includes a non-continuous business trip as claimed.

Head teaches a plurality of well known business policies/rules used to detect incorrect, inaccurate and/or fraudulent information in a business specifically Head teaches determining whether a predetermined business trip is continuous (Numbers 8, 13, 16, 34, 37) in an analogous art of business management for the purposes of catching common accounting/business errors.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the system and method for operating an electronic form system as taught by Vance et al. with its ability to check and enforce corporate policies (e.g. travel policies) would have benefited from enforcing any of a plurality of well known corporate policies including but not limited to determining if a business trip period is continuous in view of the teachings of Head; the resultant system and method enabling business to identify common business errors (i.e. potential violations of corporate policy).

Further since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it

did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Regarding Claims 10 and 18 Vance et al. teach a system and method for operating an electronic form system comprising:

- receiving a first business trip electronic form inputted from a user (Column 5, Lines 1-16; Figure 3, Element 68; Figure 4, Element 84, 120; Figure 2, Element 40, 50);
- reading and comparing a first and second business trip electronic form previously applied by the user (Column 2, Lines 15-24, 49-54; Column 6, Lines 40-55; Column 7, Lines 10-47; Column 11, Lines 14-19; Figures 8, 10, 13);
- storing the business first business trip electronic form (Figures 2, 13, Element 128); and
- showing a warning message (notification, alert) to the user if the business trip period violates a business policy (policy violation, exceptions, unauthorized trips, etc.; Column 2, Lines 14-23; Column 7, Lines 30-47; Column 8, Lines 26-33).

Head teaches comparing business trip data (records) to determine if there is an overlap (duplicate, repeat; Numbers 8, 24, 24, 27) business trip in an analogous art of business management.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the system and method for operating an electronic form system as taught by Vance

et al. with its ability to check and enforce corporate policies (e.g. travel policies) would have benefited from enforcing any of a plurality of well known corporate policies including but not limited to overlapping and/or duplicate business trips or expenses in view of the teachings of Head; the resultant system and method enabling business to identify common business errors (i.e. potential violations of corporate policy).

Further since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

***Conclusion***

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SCOTT L. JARRETT whose telephone number is (571)272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bradley Bayat can be reached on (571) 272-6704. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Scott L Jarrett/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3624